



US 63

Environmental Assessment

Eau Claire Transportation District
March 2003
Volume 2, Number 1

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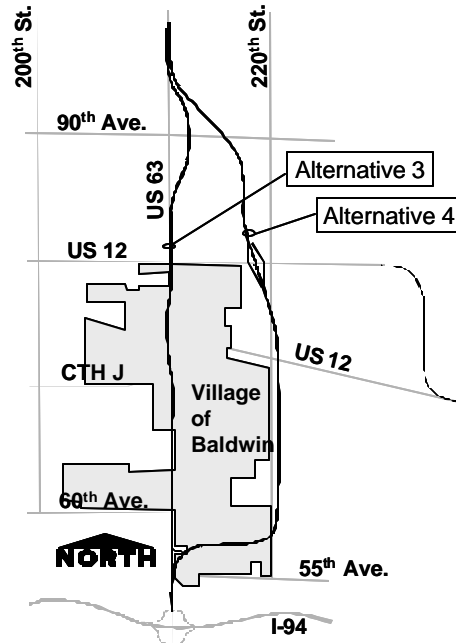
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US 63 future improvement alternatives narrowed to two



The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has narrowed the field of alternatives for the future of the US 63 corridor in Baldwin to Alternative 3 (through town) or Alternative 4 (east bypass).

The project team held meetings in October, November, and December to solicit input from local officials and the public.

In January, WisDOT dismissed Alternatives 1 and 2 from further consideration. These alternatives both realigned US 63 to the west of Baldwin.

"There was very little support from either the local officials or the public for these two alternatives," stated Jim Koenig, WisDOT project manager.

Both Alternatives 1 and 2 were perceived to have negative impacts on the schools, have higher impacts on prime farmland, were located further into the headwaters of the Rush River, and were within the Prairie Land Restoration Zone established by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

WisDOT has decided that both Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 warrant further investigation before either can be dismissed. Alternative 3 is an on-alignment improvement of US 63 through the village, including construction of a four-lane boulevard with median. Alternative 4 would relocate US 63 to the east of Baldwin with construction of a new freeway.

For more information on WisDOT's relocation process, visit <http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/CD/CD-Reloc-Brochure.html>.

A newsletter published by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to keep citizens informed.



Local Advisory Committee created

WisDOT created a local advisory committee to assist in the selection of a preferred alternative for future US 63 improvements.

The committee members include representatives from:

- Village of Baldwin
- Town of Baldwin
- Town of Eau Galle
- St. Croix County Highway Department
- St. Croix County Planning Department
- Local Businesses
- Local media

The advisory committee met three times in January and February, and has at least two more meetings scheduled in the coming months. The committee has been helping to evaluate the two remaining alternatives.

Committee topics have included:

- Defining local goals for the future of the highway.
- Defining WisDOT's goals.
- Reasons for access management.

- WisDOT land acquisition procedures.
- Anticipated impacts of both remaining alternatives.

Improvements north of Baldwin to be staged

US 63 improvements north of the village of Baldwin would use a staged strategy. Stage 1 would construct passing lanes; stage 2 would construct a four-lane highway; and stage 3 would convert US 63 to a freeway facility.

Stage 1 would be a short-term solution to improve two-way operations and safety on the existing highway. Construction of passing lanes has relatively few impacts and construction costs.

Stage 2 is a longer-term solution that would be implemented when a two-lane highway can no longer handle the traffic volumes. The four-lane highway would have at-grade intersections at the side roads.

Stage 2 would have significant impacts and construction costs but would greatly increase the capacity and safety of the highway.

Stage 3 would be implemented if safety became an issue on the four-lane facility. The freeway facility would include full access control, meaning there would be access to the highway at interchanges.

There would be moderate impacts and construction costs associated with the upgrade from a four-lane highway to a freeway. Most of the impacts would result from additional grade separations.

Public information meeting to be held April 29, 2003

The next public information meeting for the US 63 project will be held on April 29, 2003, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at American Legion Post 240, 410 Maple Street, Baldwin.

The meeting will review Alternatives 3 and 4 as well as the preferred alternative, reasons why it was selected, anticipated impacts, and corridor preservation measures.

